DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 123 181 SO 009 133

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TITLE	Recurrent Education, Policy and Development in OECD Countries: The Swedish View of Recurrent Education.
INSTITUTION	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris (France). Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.
REPORT NO	CERI-RE-72.01
PUB DATE	7 Aug 72
NOTE	21p.; For related documents, see SO 009 134 and 135
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Education; Comparative Education; *Continuous Learning; Educational Change; *Educational Development; Educational Equality; Educational Innovation; Educational Objectives; Educational Policy; Educational Problems; *Educational Programs; Post Secondary Education; *Program Descriptions
IDENTIFIERS	*Sweden

ABSTRACT

This report, part of a series on the state of recurrent education in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries, focuses on recurrent education in Sweden. The Swedish concept of recurrent education envisages a radical change in the whole system of education. Swedish educators see it as a strategy that will change the present postcompulsory system into a system that emphasizes the alternation between work and study throughout a lifetime. After a short introduction, section 2 outlines the various models of recurrent education in Sweden. Section 3 examines the objectives of recurrent education in relation to equality, the labor market, a common set of values, and pedagogy. Section 4 details the problem areas in the course of implementing the program. It takes into account changes in the secondary school, admission policy, distribution of educational resources and outreach activities, eeducational finance, and the relation between formal and informal education. Section 5 concludes with remarks and observations on the present position of recurrent education in Sweden. (DE)

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RECURRENT EDUCATION

POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT IN OECD COUNTRIES

THE SWEDISH VIEW OF RECURRENT EDUCATION

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Centre for Educational Research
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CERI/RE/72.01

Paris, 7th August, 1972.

Or. Engl.

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by

Jarl BENGTSSON

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PREFACE

This report is one of a series of six CERI documents on the state of recurrent education in OECD Member countries. Recurrent education, on which CERI has been carrying out preparatory work in the last few years, is rapidly becoming one of the most debated, but also one of the least clearly-defined, new concepts about the planning and organisation of education in modern society.

It has therefore been considered essential to endeavour to attach a precise meaning to what originated as an unstructured new concept and to spell out its structural and policy implications. As part of the project on recurrent education, for which Denis Kallen and Jarl Bengtsson carry the responsibility on the CERI staff side, CERI will in the near future publish a "Clarifying Report" which attempts to point out the essential characteristics of such a system and how it relates to the present sectors of post-compulsory and adult education.

The present document reviews the discussion on recurrent education in Sweden and places it in its brief historical context. Because of the difficulties of access to the Swedish literature on the subject, it is hoped that it will contribute to dispelling the mist which, in the eyes of many foreign observers, surrounds Swedish thinking on this subject.

The present report is to be seen in relation to the "Clarifying Report" referred to above: conditions in Sweden differ from those in other countries, and have led to discussions on recurrent education in a much clearer and coherent context than elsewhere. The Swedish scene is also different from that in the other OECD Member countries in the sense that the systematic search for new solutions with the active involvement of representatives from all interested institutions and groups is part of the national political tradition.

This report on Swedish experience and thinking, on the way in which the U'68 Commission attempts to define the essentials of a post-compulsory educational policy for the future and on its proposals for a future system as such, is highly relevant to all countries. The problems that Sweden faces are basically the same as elsewhere, and it would be instructive to these other countries to follow the progress that Sweden is making in elaborating proposals for an educational system designed to meet the challenges of future society.

The other reports in the series concern France, the Federal Republic of Germany, New York State, Norway and Yugoslavia.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the last three years the concept of recurrent education has really come into focus in the Swedish educational debate. Today it is often the theme of conferences and meetings and it frequently crops up in the newspapers when educational policy issues are being discussed.

The idea of recurrent education in Sweden may be traced back to the Swedish economist G. Rehn* who from the early fifties has argued in favour of a much more flexible educational system, especially in relation to changes within the labour market. However, it was U68 (the 1968 Educational Commission) that actually launched the concept when it published a pamphlet (1) in 1969 about the function and structure of higher education. In this pamphlet, recurrent education was presented as a new educational strategy distinct from the current one whereby uninterrupted education is normally provided between the ages of 7 and 25. Behind the thinking of U68 could be seen the influence of the then Minister of Education, Olof Palme, who had particular interest in this new educational strategy which he expressed, notably, at the sixth Conference of European Ministers of Education in 1969.

As with all new concepts, recurrent education is difficult to interpret in an unambiguous way. Does it mean a profound change of the whole present formal system or no more than an expansion of present forms of adult education, leaving the present system of youth education unchanged? In attempting to answer these questions with respect to Sweden, we have to go back to the thinking of U68 since it is the body that has examined the problem most thoroughly.

The U68 Commission was established in April 1968 with the main task of making an overall plan for post-secondary education in Sweden in the 1970's. It consists of the Under Secretary of Education (Chairman), the Directors of the National Board of Education and of the National Board of Labour, and the Chancellor of Universities. To these members are attached representatives from the political parties, from the educational system (including the students) and from the labour market (both employees and employers). The Commission is expected to present its proposals before the end of this year, and among those that concern the future of post-secondary education in Sweden there will be some guide-lines as to the possible part recurrent education will play.

What follows in this Report, therefore, is a description of the concept of recurrent education as conceived by U68 and an account of the objectives and motives of this new educational strategy as they have been perceived in Sweden. Attention will also be drawn to some of the problems that may arise if a system of recurrent education is introduced.

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2. TOWARDS A CLEARER INTERPRETATION OF RECURRENT EDUCATION

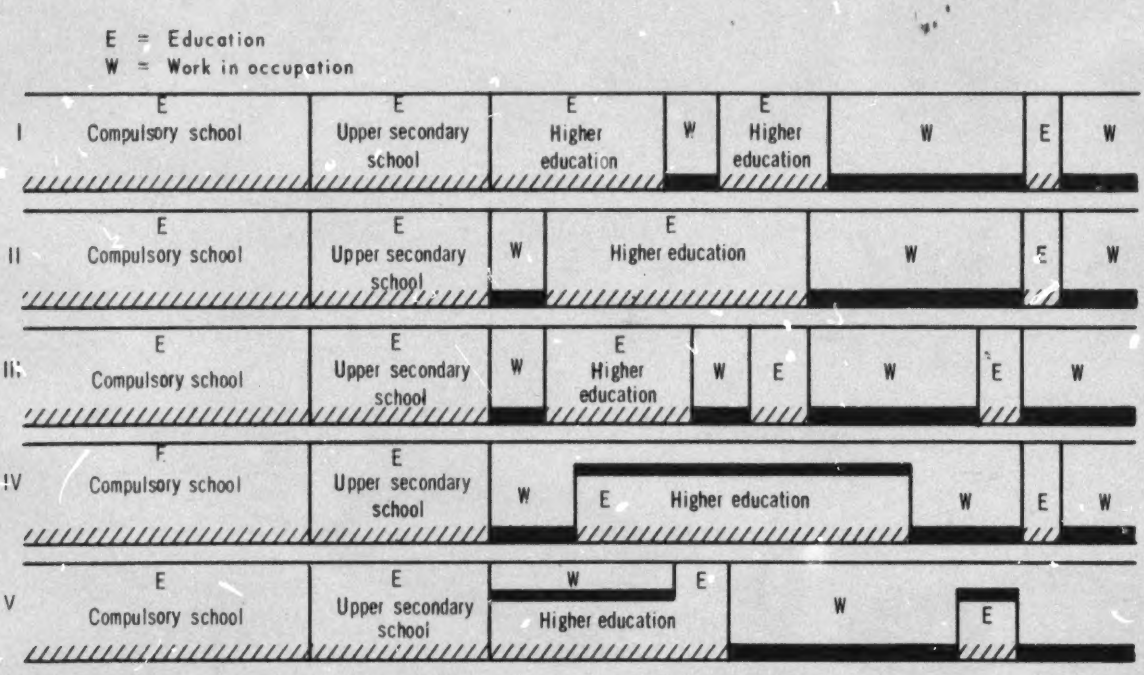
In the general debate, two different interpretations of recurrent education emerge. One sees recurrent education primarily as something that deals with adult education, giving the adults a second chance. This implies an expansion of present forms of adult education and the creation of new ones. Implicitly or explicitly, it takes the present system of youth education for granted and does not anticipate any profound changes in it.

The second interpretation of the concept envisages quite radical changes in the whole system of education. It sees recurrent education as a strategy that will change the present post-compulsory system into something that will provide an alternation between work and study after the years at school. Even if there is some overlap between these two interpretations of recurrent education, they imply nevertheless two strategies clearly different in scope and direction.

In Sweden the second of these two interpretations has found most favour, and in one of its pamphlets (1) published in 1969, U68 outlined some tentative models for a system of recurrent education based upon it. These are reproduced in Figure 1.

Figure 1

SOME POSSIBLE MODELS FOR RECURRENT EDUCATION



Model I. Higher education continues directly from upper secondary school. A first period of higher education is followed by work in an occupation, after which the higher education is completed. After some years in an occupation, a brief educational period follows, consisting perhaps of a refresher or upgrading course with some specialisation.

Model II. From upper secondary school direct to an occupation, after a period in which higher education is completed in one sequence. Refresher or upgrading courses are offered sometime after return to the occupation.

Model III. Periods of occupational work both after upper secondary school and between periods of higher education. Refresher or upgrading course, later, after some years in an occupation.

Model IV. Part-time higher educational studies concurrent with an occupation. These begin after a period of occupational work following upper secondary school. Refresher or upgrading course after some years in an occupation.

Model V. Part-time higher education starts concurrently with occupational work immediately after upper secondary school. Final period of higher education is full-time. A later refresher or upgrading course may be taken on a part-time basis.

It is not to be expected that one of these models above will be decided upon or even recommended as the pattern for recurrent education in Sweden. The intention of publishing them was, rather, to show the many sidedness of the concept.

None of the models in Figure 1 actually indicate consequent changes in the secondary school, but it seems fairly clear that what they should offer would be different, for instance, for models I and II. The consequences for the secondary schools implicit in models II, III and IV must, among other things, be that they should include some vocational education or training for all pupils. The general implications of recurrent education for the upper secondary schools have, of course, been explored by U68 and the Commission's suggestions have been presented for public debate in another pamphlet (2).

While these models give a general idea of the Swedish way of looking at structural change in the present system that might be required by the introduction of recurrent education, they cannot, of course, speak much of the policy aspects of the reform itself. Indeed, it cannot be said at the time of writing that there is a clear-cut policy for the scope and future direction of recurrent education in Sweden. What can be expected from the proposals of U68 is some general statements concerning recurrent education as a new long-term strategy for restructuring the organisation for study after the completion of compulsory schooling. Such a restructuring would facilitate alternation between periods of work and of study. In other words, recurrent education is a long-term goal to which present and short-term educational changes and reforms will have to be related. And it can be expected that U68, whose main concern is the whole field of higher education,

will suggest a form of recurrent education at this level consisting of shorter courses which can be based on earlier study or work experience, and which complement the more traditional forms of study. Closely linked to this is the distribution of the new educational facilities at this level. One of the major outcomes of U68 will, therefore, be proposals for a more decentralised system of higher education. In a long-term perspective this is considered as one of the basic prerequisites for a system of recurrent education.

Recurrent education as conceived in Sweden, then, is not a reform that can be introduced as from a given date. It is, rather, an aim within a long-term plan for a new system that no longer provides education, as the present, in an uninterrupted way between the ages of 7 and 25. Further, if a system of a recurrent education is to be implemented, it follows that new policies must be developed in a number of spheres outside education. For instance, a lot of problems concerning the labour market and the individuals costs will have to be solved concurrently with the strictly educational ones.

3. THE OBJECTIVES OF RECURRENT EDUCATION

The objectives of recurrent education are not fundamentally different from the objectives of the present system of education. It is, rather, that it may be a better way of fulfilling these objectives. As seen in specific relation to recurrent education, these can be grouped into four categories:

- objectives related to equality,
- objectives related to the interaction between education and labour market,
- objectives related to the need for a common set of values,
- objectives related to motivation of students.

3.1. Objectives in relation to equality

The first of these objectives has been a permanent issue in the Swedish educational debate since the war. It was - and is - considered that high priority ought to be given to meeting the growing individual demand for education by extending educational opportunity at all levels and by removing social, economic and regional barriers to educational participation.

Instruments that have been used in this process are the realisation of the comprehensive school, the expansion of secondary, post-secondary and adult education and increased educational grants. However, even if these educational reforms have increased the number of students at all levels, socio-economic variables still play an important role in the individual's choice between different educational options. For instance, one of the investigations initiated by U68 and carried out by Bengtsson (1971) (3) has shown that the influence of social constraints upon the pupils' choice after completion of lower secondary school (the last year in the Grundskola) is still very real. In Table 1 the pupils are divided into three social groups and the figures show how the social groups

differ in this demand for more or less prestige and status-loaded upper secondary education.

Table 1

Plans of pupils in grade 9 with different social backgrounds

(in percent)

Father's social and occupational group	"Gymnasium"	Contin. school	Voc. school	Work	Other	Total
I. Upper middle class	82	10	6	2	-	100
II. Lower middle class	46	21	20	7	6	100
III. Working class	25	21	34	13	7	100
All together	37	20	26	8	9	100

At the transfer from the "gymnasium" to the university the same pattern can be found. Another investigation initiated by U68 and carried out by Gesser (1971) (4) shows that a further and very serious selection takes place after the gymnasium. Table 2 gives a picture of the estimated distribution of post-secondary education in relation to different social backgrounds.

Table 2

Estimated distribution of post-secondary education in relation to different social backgrounds (in percent)

Father's social and occupational group	University level: "Prestige"	Other	Other post-secondary	No post-secondary	Total
I. Upper middle class	15	64	10	11	100
II. Lower middle class	3	17	4	76	100
III. Working class	1	8	2	89	100

What in the Table is called "prestige" education comprises mainly professional schools and especially those giving certificates at graduate level. Proportionally, the socio-economic bias is stronger here than in the arts and science faculties included in the "other" university category.

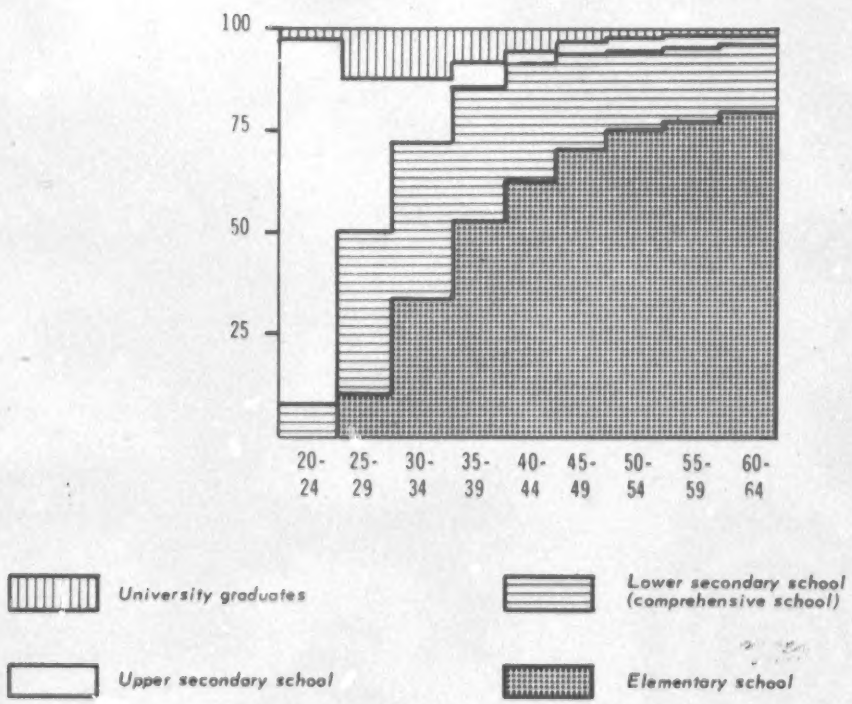
These investigations, together with several others completed recently in Sweden, show clearly that the present system to great extent fails in reaching the goal of equal educational opportunity. Of course, findings like these are well-known today in most countries, but

they ought to be recognised as indicators that the present organisation of youth education may be a real stumbling block in the way of reaching this goal.

Even if this inequality within a single generation is a serious one, it is realised in Sweden that there is another problem of educational inequality of even greater significance. This is the educational inequality, or the educational gap, between the favoured young generation and their far less favoured elders. Most individuals in the present labour force, for example, have had only six or seven years of primary schooling, while, as a result of recent expansion, ninety per cent of the young generation today is getting an education lasting for at least eleven or twelve years. The Confederation of Trade Unions has especially emphasised this gap as a topic of high priority in policy discussions relating to equality. Its significance becomes even clearer if we look into the future; Figure 2 shows a prediction of the educational composition of different age groups in the Swedish population in the year 1980 (5).

Figure 2

PREDICTED EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
OF THE SWEDISH POPULATION IN 1980



The figure shows that if the present resource distribution between youth and adult education continues, about 50 per cent of the population aged 35-40 will have received only elementary schooling in 1980. From such forecasts as this it is clear that, with an ongoing expansion of youth education, the gap between the generations can be expected to grow and become a very serious future problem. From an economic point of view - that is, with an eye on scarce resources - educational politicians have been asking if further expansion of youth education can be combined in some way with an intensification of adult education.

At all events, both of these kinds of educational inequality - between the generations and within the youth generation - have been used as arguments in favour of a system of recurrent education. Such a system, it is said, will make the educational choice less dramatic and decisive for the youth, and thereby give them a chance of expressing less "prestige" loaded options in favour of more interest-oriented ones. It is also believed that such a system would stimulate many young people to get work experience before embarking on further education. As to the gap between the generations, it has been pointed out that a system of recurrent education would prevent its continuation into the future and, indeed, that one of its short-term objectives should be the provision of an over-bridging education for under-educated adults.

In the course of this debate in Sweden, new definitions of youth and adult education have emerged. Youth Education has come to be defined as the education given up to the age at which a pupil today normally leaves upper secondary school in Sweden and Adult Education as education after the age of 18. The latter thus comprises a number of different forms: on the one hand, popular education, local government adult education, and labour-market education; on the other, higher education in all its guises. Within this new definition, two main categories of adult student can be recognised: those with a long period of earlier education, (i.e. those who have completed upper secondary school); and those possessing a short period of earlier education.

The problems that arise from such a definition of Youth and Adult Education are many and intricate. First, at a time when money is scarce, there is the problem of distribution of resources between the two areas. It can be expected, for example, that a major endeavour to provide over-bridging education for adults with only a short education will reduce the resources available for those with a longer educational background. Whether this will be done or not turns on how serious the inequality between the generations is thought to be. This is not really a problem for U68, so one may expect that the Commission will only make some general observations about it. However, the problem exists and will presumably remain one of the most important in the future Swedish debate so long as the goal of equality continues to be an important element in educational policy.

The second principal problem relates to changes in the educational organisation to enable both groups of adult students to participate in the same system of recurrent education. Such a system cannot, of course, be shaped overnight; but even if recurrent education has to be seen as a long-term policy-goal, present and short-term changes in higher education and other forms of adult education have to make some provision for it.

In summary, the goal of educational equality has been one of the strongest arguments in favour of recurrent education in Sweden. It can be anticipated, therefore, that this same goal will be a very strong influence when it comes to the actual shaping of a system to bring recurrent education truly into being.

3.2. Objectives in relation to the labour market

Since the war, it has been the intention in Sweden to plan the educational system in accordance with the overall needs of the socio-economic sector. Several commissions have tried, with more or less success, to forecast the future needs of the various professions and other important fields of occupation. Such forecasts have often failed, however, because the speed of social change and the needs of the labour market have been under-estimated. The effect of such uncertainty on youth education has been the adoption of a planning strategy characterised by as broad a curriculum as possible and the minimum number of cul-de-sacs. This created a "many-sided" flexibility at the interface of education and the labour market, the young people being equipped with a general form of knowledge valid for and transformable to changing conditions at work and in society at large.

Another type of flexibility between the educational systems and the labour market is of course inherent in the concept of recurrent education. This one can call a "many-timed" flexibility, because the interplay between work and study is not restricted to a single period in a lifetime. A close accord between the national demand for educated manpower and its supply is, of course, difficult to achieve at any one time, especially with professional people, for example, whose education is, perforce, a long one. There is also reason to suppose that what is called national demand is to a large extent a projection of the quantity of young people who passed out of the educational system just before the time in question. Calculation of future needs may often, therefore, be an estimate of the adaptability of the labour market rather than a true statement of estimated manpower requirements. Nor are the difficulties of such forecasting likely to get less in future, the reasons for this being rapid changes in the structure of industry on the one hand and the explosion of knowledge on the other. What is more, the sense of vocation and other factors that initially guided an individual's choice for a long uninterrupted course of education may, in these days, have changed very greatly by the time when the course is ended. This applies both to the quantitative extent of certain vocational courses and to vocational knowledge itself which, in many fields, quickly becomes obsolete nowadays. The difficulties of equating educational output with recruitment needs becomes even greater when the creation of economic trade blocks gives rise to a potential labour market different from the more limited, national one.

All these problems point towards the need for a new educational structure - something that can meet the demands of a changing society and a changing labour market in a better and more flexible way. In short, some system of recurrent education. Whether or not this would be justified on purely economic grounds is still an open question, and there are certainly many unsolved problems of cost and benefit; however two Swedish economists, I.Stahl (6), G. Rehn (7), have already reached the conclusion that the expansion of youth education has now reached a

level at which it could be economically viable if there were a redistribution of resources as between it and adult education. This, again, points to the creation of a system of recurrent education. Another issue that has been discussed in relation to the labour market and recurrent education is the possibility of using the educational organisation to reinforce existing instruments of economic policy. This would mean that, in periods of unemployment or low demand for labour, the government could provide further education for both adults and young people as an alternative to other measures of alleviation. If the educational organisation were built on the principle of recurrent education, a policy such as this would be so much the easier to implement.

In summary: the educational goal of keeping the labour market supplied with adequately educated recruits would appear to be better achieved if the present 'uninterrupted' system were changed to a system of recurrent education.

3.3. Objectives concerning a common set of values

A significant endeavour in the school reforms of the 'sixties in Sweden has been to strengthen the contact between school and working life and to give schoolchildren actual experience of what goes on outside. This was briefly, but nevertheless expressively, stated in the 1965 curriculum for the gymnasium. After indicating certain concrete ways for strengthening these contacts, the directions continue: "These points of contact between education and the community should make it easier for pupils to grow into working life and the life of the community and should stimulate their interest in problems and conditions in different activities of society. Schools should devote particular attention thereto, as school pupils do not obtain the same direct contact with a number of social questions as do young people who are working in an occupation." One of the reasons why the need for contact between the educational environment and society at large has acquired such an important place in the educational debate is the fear that the educational explosion might lead to conditions that oppose the goal of solidarity and democratic co-operation in working life and in society at large. In this perspective particular attention has been drawn to the risks involved in the rise of meritocracy and of hyper-professionalism.

The problem really lies in the existence of two systems of valuation and the risk of the gap between them growing wider. One of these systems is, of course, that generally accepted by the adult working population. The other is created by the younger generation during its life at school - a relatively homogeneous and sometimes closed milieu. Since education for most young people has become a long and uninterrupted process, personality development and valuation patterns are to a great extent fixed by the time they emerge into the world outside. When they do, they meet quite another valuation pattern, one created by men and women at work, and this may have very little in common with their own. That these two patterns of valuation may collide, even violently, is in itself no danger. A common frame of reference need not presuppose identity of views on the construction and function of society or the lines on which it should develop. However, at least the problems or activities that come up for debate should be equally meaningful to

both sides, even if the valuations on which proposals for action are based are not shared. When differences in the patterns of valuation do become a danger, is when they are irrelevant to each other and proceed to cause a growing gap between younger and older generations.

An added complexity here is increasing internationalisation. Growing immigration and new types of business organisations with international affiliations may affect the scale of values. The solution here is probably not to force the national pattern on such individuals and enterprises (i.e. assimilate them) but to make an attempt at their integration.

In tackling this problem of the growing differences between the patterns of valuation among different generations, recurrent education has come in for much support as an instrument for lessening the gap of understanding between students and the working population and between younger and older generations as well. The then Minister of Education, Olof Palme, advanced this view clearly in his speech at the Sixth Conference of European Ministers of Education when he said "Recurrent education should help us on the way towards equality in society. The interplay between different human activities would result in their being regarded in various respects as on equal footing. The understanding between different social groups would increase as people had more similar experiences. The relations between the generations would improve."

3.4. Pedagogical objectives

In as much as pedagogical objectives have been discussed in the context of recurrent education they have primarily focused on motivations for learning. It seems generally accepted that in the present educational system many young people get tired of school because of monotony and isolation. On the other hand, vocational and other forms of adult education are proving distinctly attractive. The subject matter is clearly more meaningful when it is related directly to experience at work. It has also been observed that adults who become interested in education absorb a given volume of learning more quickly than young people who have no occupational experience. It must be added, however, that these cases refer to adults who have spontaneously sought further education either for its own sake or the improved occupational status it can bring about.

Some attention must also be given to the growing number of students who choose to continue in education because they know it is a kind of "must" in modern society - not because they have any real interest in their chosen field of study. In the present uninterrupted educational system they fear that if they do not take the opportunity offered by society straight away (for example to go on to higher education) there will be no more chances later on. In other words, the present educational system causes a "choice-process" which does not permit young people to break off for a period of working experience that could in fact be of great value to the individual in making his choice of an occupation or profession. It is argued that a system of recurrent education, on the other hand, would impart a healthy motivation for study as well as engender a more realistic choice-process among young people before embarking on a career.

In summary it must be observed that the various objectives put forward by the U68 Commission are thought by some people to show inconsistency or even overlap. For example, the objectives of equality and of satisfying the needs of the labour market appear at first sight to be contradictory. Problems such as these await solution alongside others in the vexed area of social and manpower planning.

4. PROBLEM AREA IN THE COURSE OF IMPLEMENTING RECURRENT EDUCATION

Before recurrent education can have its interded effect, not least in attaining the goal of equality, changes must also be made outside the educational system. Without them, there is danger that the effects may be the direct opposite of those desired effects - for instance, a fixing and possibly a deepening of the social selection and the educational gaps inherent in the educational system of today. Four areas in particular are recognised in Sweden as needful of change if a system of recurrent education is to be introduced: secondary education, admission policy, the distribution of education and finance. Each of these is worth examining in some detail.

4.1. Changes in the secondary school

At the present time the choices open to pupils leaving secondary school are, in fact, not free. Certain curricular streams give no alternatives to continued education (i.e. going on to university), others are directly vocational and lead straight to a pre-determined job-range. As distinct from this, it is now being stressed (U68 1970) that the goal of secondary education, as part of the system of recurrent education, should be to give each pupil preparation both for a vocation and for further study. With provision of this kind, it is hoped that a larger number of pupils will go straight to a job immediately after leaving school - indeed it has even been discussed if a period of work directly after school should be compulsory. For the time being, however, this is probably impossible for practical reasons because the labour market could not adjust quickly enough to an entire age group seeking employment all at the same time. It is also probable that a compulsory period of work immediately after school would cause a negative attitude towards recurrent education as well as heavily restricting the individual's free choice of his next move.

By act of parliament in 1968, the present three types of voluntary upper secondary school (the gymnasium, the continuation school and the vocational school) were integrated as from July 1, 1971, into a one-type upper secondary school. This new upper secondary school is intended to offer about 20 different educational 'lines' each of which (if the proposals of the Commission on Admission to Higher Education are accepted), may be expected to give the formal right to entering higher education to those who complete the course. However, it cannot be said that the concept of recurrent education has had a strong influence on the new unified upper secondary school for there are still some lines that are not vocationally oriented and so will not prepare pupils for work immediately after they leave.

To reconcile the recently decided changes in the upper secondary school with the concept of recurrent education, one may reasonably expect two developments in particular.

The first could take place within the framework of the rolling reform by a successive introduction of some part of a vocation-oriented curriculum into all educational lines at the new unified upper secondary school.

A second type of change could come about when a clearer-cut view of recurrent education is given in relation to the secondary school. For this U68 can be expected to give the broad guidelines in its final report. Neither of these developments, however, can be worked out independently of each other, and it would not be realistic to expect the second of them to occur on anything like a large scale during this decade.

4.2. Changes of admission policy

Another limit on free choice after leaving upper secondary school is that the admission rules and the merit-rating for higher education do not favour certain educational streams. It is now being argued that academic criteria alone should not form the basis for admission to higher education. It is being pressed that allowance should be made for previous working experience (outside school) in the admission rules so that they will not conflict with a system of recurrent education. At present U68 is considering such an admission policy and, although this work is not yet finished, it can be expected to result in a much more broader policy and one in which working experience will, in fact, be an important element. Such enablement for people with working experience to obtain higher education would clearly facilitate an individual's decision to go into outside employment for a few years as soon as he had completed upper secondary school.

Thus, a new admission policy for higher education is considered a very potent instrument for stimulating the alternation between work and study. An important assumption in this context is that those who enter directly into a profession from secondary school would not be regarded as apprentices but as regular employees. This would, of course, affect employment conditions, wage agreements and social benefits. However, these problems are only just being faced and none as yet have been solved.

4.3. Distribution of educational resources and out-reach activities

The localisation and distribution of education are also very important factors in the proper functioning of a recurrent education system. A system that offers several periods of education is considerably more exacting in terms of local ties than one consisting of a single uninterrupted period. The education of adults who already have a family and a job, who have economic responsibilities and social engagements, poses several problems not encountered in the education of young people. A further concentration of facilities in a few big centers like modern universities would put further education out of the reach of many who need it most, hence the traditional idea of a student

going to an institute of learning will have to be supplemented by the new idea of an institute going to the student.

In Sweden the embryo of this new idea already exists in the form of study circles, universities of the air, correspondence courses and university extension courses. Much of the future expansion of facilities for a system of recurrent education can therefore be expected to develop in a direction that combines these established forms of decentralised study.

Closely related to the question of distribution is that of part-time study. This will probably be an essential part of the recurrent education system and it will require facilities close to the place of living if recurrent education is to be within the reach of all the people. This touches upon what in Sweden has been called 'out-reach activities', i.e. encouragement of poorly educated adults to re-enter the educational system. Experience here shows that very active personal effort is required to attract adult people for further study. The best results hitherto have come from educational organisers working at the same place and on the same job as those they have tried to win for further education (8). And it can be stressed that this kind of 'out-reach activity' will become very important in the future, not least because of the risks in a system of recurrent education of an unequal distribution of resources among individuals or groups.

4.4. Financing of study in a system of recurrent education

An important aspect of recurrent education relates to social welfare. If an individual is to be able to participate in a system of recurrent education he must have the right to be free from his work while studying and the right to return to his work afterwards. Similar rights have been established by law for cases of pregnacy and military service and, for example, trade union courses. So far Parliament has not produced legislation for leave of absence for individuals taking educational courses, but negotiations in this matter are proceeding at the present time between employees and employers. What the outcome will be is not yet forecast.

Another question that must be tackled in a near future is how periods of study should be treated from the social insurance aspect. The present social insurance system is based on income from employment. If the individual loses his salary as a result of following a study course his social rights are, at present, affected accordingly. It would seem of considerable importance to a system of recurrent education that social insurance protection should be specifically extended to cover periods of study within the system.

Perhaps the most difficult problem is how to finance the individual's study in recurrent education. The first question is whether, as in the present educational welfare system, the benefits should be payable solely to those who take a recognised course or whether they should be linked to the individual as in an insurance system. Many voices are in favour of an insurance system, particularly because it can work with differential control instruments and could intentionally favour groups with a short basic education. It is generally appreciated, however, that a financing system of this kind could cause a lot of problems -

for example, one would have to start assuming that adult students and their families would demand much the same living standards and social security they had enjoyed previously, and this would raise far-reaching economic consequences.

During 1968 the government appointed a committee (the SVUX Committee) to draw up a set of principles for financing adult education in the future. This Committee has already published a pamphlet (9) (1971) for public discussion, and from this it can be anticipated that its final proposals will be based on the present educational welfare system complemented by some form of supplementary insurance.

4.5. The relation between formal and informal education

There is one aspect that so far has attracted little public attention: the future relationship as regards objectives and content between the different educational systems. In practical terms, this means the relation between the basic national system and, for instance, educational programmes conducted within large industrial enterprises and a good many other organisations as well. In industry this usually takes the form of recurrent occupational education geared to the short-term needs of the enterprise with a view to increasing productivity by raising the quality of the labour force. In short, it is an investment. The interplay between these various sectors is not in the terms of reference of the Commission, nevertheless it cannot but be an important factor in educational policy for the future.

The basic issue is whether the State will eventually accept a division of responsibility, as it were, between the private and the public sector. If it does, this would mean that the State would, to some extent, relinquish its comprehensive role of serving both the labour market and the private citizen and concentrate on the latter - leaving supply of specific educational needs of the labour market to industry and other large commercial enterprises. In such an 'emancipatory strategy' recurrent education would have a very important part to play. Indeed it should have sufficient weight of its own to become a recognised sub-system in the pattern of national education with the specific aim of emancipating the individual from the various social constraints and enabling him to participate actively in the development of his own particular section of society.

If such a possibility becomes a reality in the future, it will have great repercussions on the polyvalent recurrent educational system of the State as planned at present and, as suggested above, polyvalent education in the future may become a polyvalence between different educational systems. Doubtless such a forecast may look somewhat unrealistic today, when service to the labour market is given distinct priority in the formal system. It may also produce scepticism about equal educational opportunities being given in the programmes organised by the private sector. There will, too, be problems of co-operation between the two systems and this may raise intricate political questions. All these and a number of other difficult problems will have to be faced in a near future if a system of recurrent education is to be implemented, and it seems inevitable that the traditional views as to the role of the national educational system will be seriously challenged in the arena of debate.

5. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRESENT POSITION

Internationally, perhaps even more clearly than in Sweden, recurrent education is conceived sometimes as an educational policy instrument to be used to adapt the educational system better to the needs of the labour market, and sometimes as an educational policy instrument for emancipating the individual from the various social constraints laid upon him in a capitalistic society. In both cases it is clear that recurrent education, like other educational reforms, must be considered within a given political context.

In Sweden the possible contradiction between the two goals - adaptation or emancipation - has not so far attracted much attention, although it is generally assumed that both would be attained better through some form of recurrent education than within the present system. Maybe, a debate about the possible contradiction between these goals will arise when the U68 Commission presents its final proposals - those with marxist views might certainly be expected to raise the issue. Meanwhile, however, the most pressing problem that might be solved by recurrent education in Sweden is seen to be the educational gap between generations.

As to finance, U68 and the SVUX Committee have made some calculations as to the costs of a so-called 'overbridging' educational programme, and they have found that it would be very expensive - not the least in supporting the adult's participation in it. However, if present policies are pursued, it can be anticipated that adult education (principally the 'overbridging' programme referred to) will have a very high priority in the 1970s. This means that recurrent education with a social welfare motive - a very expensive programme for adults who had a relatively long period of education in their youth - will have to wait till the 80s begin.

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